

Myth #113: A Tennis Great's Life Started in Carson City by Guy Rocha, Former Nevada State Archivist

It sometimes seems like everybody claims that some notable person lived in an historic house. In Carson City's historic district, a claim is made that Governor Jewett W. Adams once lived in the house at 312 N. Mountain Street. Well, he did, but many years after he was governor. The residence was never the Governor's Mansion.

Adams served as Nevada's lieutenant governor from 1875 to 1883 and governor from 1883 to 1887. Prior to the completion of the current Governor's Mansion in 1909, wherever the governor lived was considered the Governor's Mansion. Governor Adams lived on the south side of Carson City in a large residence near Thompson Street and between 4th and 5th streets.



Adams continued to live in the house while he served as superintendent of the Carson City branch of the U.S. Mint from 1894 to 1898. By 1906, he had sold his house to State Printer Andrew Maute, and he and wife Emma were renting a house at 312 N. Mountain from George McLoughlin. The couple lived there until relocating to San Francisco in 1915, where Jewett Adams died in 1920.

However, the story that a notable person lived in the house on the western edge of today's historic district has an interesting twist, obscured by the passage of time. George McLoughlin, while living at 312 N. Mountain, worked for Superintendent Adams at the Carson City Mint until he was transferred to the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia in 1898. In 1903, McLoughlin transferred to the San Francisco U.S. Mint.

A child, Maurice Evans McLoughlin, was born to George and his wife Harriet ("Hattie") on January 7, 1890 while they lived at 312 N. Mountain. The *Carson City Morning Appeal* noted the "little fellow . . . weighed about nine pounds and had good lungs."

Maurice, while growing up in San Francisco, became an avid tennis player, winning the San Francisco and Pacific Coast championships in 1907. After graduating from Lowell High School in 1908, the Pacific Coast Tennis Association sent McLoughlin to the national championships at Newport, Rhode Island, the following year. When teammates Melville Long and McLoughlin were matched again each other, Eastern society witnessed a fast-paced, powerful game unlike anything played up to that time. Competitive tennis was generally a high society game reserved for the sons of the wealthy. "With his powerful serve and deadly overhand smashes," according to one biographical account, "McLoughlin had introduced a new kind of tennis, and the game would never be the same. Modern tennis may be said to have been born that day at Newport."

"Red" McLoughlin, known as the "California Comet," was soon considered one of the best tennis players in the United States. By 1910, he ranked fourth among American players and in 1911 ranked second, playing on the Davis Cup Team that defeated Great Britain. He ranked first among American players in 1912 and 1913 and won the American championships in those years, the first American west of the Mississippi to win the title. In 1913, McLoughlin helped the United States to win the Davis Cup but lost in the finals at Wimbledon. He was also on the national doubles championship team in 1912, 1913, and 1914.

At Forest Hills, New York, a crowd estimated at more than 12,000 witnessed McLoughlin's match against Australian Norman Brookes in the 1914 Davis Cup, which according to the *New York Times*, was "the most memorable set these international matches have ever produced." Service in the first set was unbroken for thirty games before McLoughlin won 17-15. He took the next two sets, 6-3 and 6-3—a total of fifty games in two hours--although the United States lost the series and the cup.

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McLoughlin was among the greatest tennis players in the world and again ranked number one in the United States in 1914 when he was upset in the U.S. national finals. Still ranked number one in 1915 despite the setback, he again lost in the finals of the U.S. nationals. He found time to write a book, *Tennis as I Play It*, published in 1915.

McLoughlin stopped playing competitive tennis and joined the Navy during World War I. He also married at that time. Upon his return to the game in 1919, he was badly defeated in the quarterfinals of the nationals and retired from tennis competition.

McLoughlin lived in southern California the rest of his life, an avid golfer, dying in Hermosa Beach on December 10, 1957. He lived to see his election to the Tennis Hall of Fame in March 1957.

It was a meteoric, world class career, and it all started in 1890 with the birth of a nine pound baby boy at 312 N. Mountain Street in Carson City.

Photograph courtesy of Sue Ann Monteleone, Nevada State Museum.

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